



# Case Study: Middle School Principal Achieves Success with Standards-Based Report Cards

## Ellington Public Schools, CT



### Customer Profile

City / State:  
Ellington, Connecticut

School Type:  
Public

Number of Schools:  
5

Grades:  
PK - 12

Enrollment:  
2660

Implemented:  
2006

### The School

Ellington Middle School (EMS) is one of five schools that make up the Ellington School System in Tolland County, CT. Ellington Middle School, comprised of approximately 425 students in grades seven and eight, is dedicated to cultivating a community of learners in an environment that is safe, supportive and nurturing, and which promotes academic, social and emotional growth for all.

The Ellington School System relies on the AdminPlus Student Information System to effectively manage student data, communicate with parents and students, and produce report cards.

### The Principal

David Pearson has revolutionized the instructional systems and structures at EMS since his appointment there in 2005. The traditional junior high model has been transformed to one based on effective teaming practices, integrated instruction and parent engagement. By minimizing leveling practices there has been a dramatic increase in the number of eighth grade students completing Algebra 1 and English Language Arts, and mathematics test scores are consistently at the top of the District Reference Groups (DRGs).

Pearson is the first administrator in Connecticut's history to have received the Assistant Principal of the Year Award, Outstanding First Year Principal Award and Principal of the Year Award. He was named the state's top assistant principal in 2001 when he was associate principal of Timothy Edwards Middle School in South Windsor; and, he was selected as the middle level outstanding first-year principal in 2003 as principal of Two Rivers Magnet Middle School in East Hartford.



**Solution:**  
AdminPlus Student  
Information System

**Benefit:**  
Effectively able to manage  
student data, communicate  
with parents and students,  
and produce report cards.

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## The Challenge

In 2010, the Connecticut State Board of Education (SBE) adopted new national academic standards known as the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) in English language arts and mathematics that established what Connecticut's public school students should know and be able to do as they progress through Grades K-12.

Since the SBE's adoption of the Common Core, districts across Connecticut have implemented the standards and made preparations for the next generation of assessments. As part of this process, David Pearson, principal of Ellington Middle School, sought a more accurate system of reporting skills students must demonstrate to meet each grade level's standards.

## The Solution

As part of the Common Core State Standards initiative, Pearson spearheaded what became a three-year endeavor to develop a report card that would not only keep students, teachers and parents focused on student learning goals, but closed the gap in achievement among different groups of students. He sought to have a reporting system that would also provide more accurate information about a student's progress toward meeting specific content standards for the various subjects taught at the seventh and eighth grade levels.

Pearson launched the project by forming a Performance-Based Learning Committee (PBLC) to plan out the details of the new grading method. Made up of a team of teachers and administrators, they researched how to best introduce a new standards-based report card. Faced with a myriad of questions - among them being how they would calculate grades, how they could link assignments to standards, and how rubrics could be customized in the system - the committee sought a solution that would address them all. The district used Rediker's AdminPlus to collect data and create report cards, and these challenges would truly test the system's capabilities.

Knowing that going from a traditional to a standards-based reporting system would be a significant shift for any school community, Pearson framed the new grading system as "report cards plus - everything in a traditional report card, plus more detailed and actionable standards feedback".

The PBLC agreed that Rediker's report card system was part of the solution as it allowed them to customize standards and skills to meet their needs, then design and print the report cards. Customization would also allow for a letter grade to be added to each subject along with the standards associated with it. In addition, Rediker's customization allowed the school to reach its goal of creating a report card that separated academic achievement from feedback on students' effort levels.

Teachers and parents can **work together**  
to ensure that **students succeed.**

## The Results

With the help of the AdminPlus Student Information System, Ellington Middle School introduced their new standards-based report card at the end of the 2013-14 school year. The report cards identify a student's level of progress with regard to each standard as well as provide an overall letter grade. The successful implementation of the standards-based grading system promotes self-directed learning and student acquisition of 21st century skills. In addition, the new standards-based report cards were a natural lead-in to digital portfolios and student-led conferences.

"With the new standards-based reporting system, students can be evaluated more objectively according to consistent grade-level standards," Pearson explained. "The new system will help close the gap in achievement among different groups of students. And, the new report cards will provide the added benefit of keeping teachers and parents focused on student learning goals from the very beginning of the year."

Where letter grades used in traditional report cards are a more subjective reflection of individual teachers' expectations for student effort and achievement, Rediker's report cards provide detailed information about how a child is doing in each subject. Parents will be able to see whether their child needs extra help in certain areas or when they need to be challenged more.

"By using these clearly defined standards, teachers and parents can work together to ensure that students succeed," Pearson said.

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12/15/2015

# **P R I D E Scores**

Persistent - Respectful - Independent - Disciplined - Enthusiastic

KEY: 3=Exceeds, 2=Meets, 1=Not Yet

SUBJECT	SEP1	SEP2	SEP3	TEACHER
7 TECH. ED.				
7 ART				
7 Academic Literacy				
7 MUSIC				
7 LANGUAGE ARTS				
7 SOCIAL STUDIES				
7 FRENCH				
7-1 PRE-ALGEBRA				
7 GENERAL SCIENCE				
7 COMPUTERS				
7TH CHORUS				
7 PE/HEALTH				
AVERAGES				

## **QUARTERLY UNIFIED ARTS CLASSES**

7 TECH. ED.	1st	2nd	3rd
Employ critical thinking skills independently and in teams to solve problems. Follow all personal and classroom safety rules consistently. Identify and properly use hand, power, and digital tools.			
<b>Comments</b>			

7 ART	1st	2nd	3rd
Relate Visual Arts to History & Culture. Reflect & evaluate their and other's art work. Apply media techniques and processes. Understand and use art element and principles.			
<b>Comments</b>			

7 Academic Literacy	1st	2nd	3rd
Analyze text and draws logical conclusions. Write arguments to support claims with clear reasoning and evidence.			
<b>Comments</b>			

7 MUSIC	1st	2nd	3rd
Create: Understand essential composition concepts. Performs: Decode music to sing/play independently. Respond: Describe, analyze, and evaluate music.			
<b>Comments</b>			

**John Doe**

SASID: 9999999999

**ELLINGTON MIDDLE SCHOOL 2015-16**

Ellington, CT 06029

**GRADE 7**

HOMEROOM: Smith-10

**David R. Pearson, Principal**

Attendance				
	1st	2nd	3rd	YTD
<b>Absences</b>	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
<b>Tardies</b>	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
<b>Dismissals</b>	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00

If you need further clarification or assistance, please call the EMS Guidance Office at (860) 896-2345.

The purpose of this report card is to communicate with parents and students about achievement of specific learning standards. It identifies students' level of progress with regard to those standards, areas of strength, and areas where additional time and/or effort are needed.

2.5 Overall Average = Student Society

 Ellington Middle School  
Report Card Sample

The front side of each report includes this statement:

"The purpose of this report card is to communicate with parents and students about achievement of specific learning standards. It identifies students' level of progress with regard to these standards, areas of strength, and stresses where additional time and/or effort are needed."

For more information about  
AdminPlus, visit  
[www.rediker.com](http://www.rediker.com)

